UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1997/343
29 April 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 29 APRIL 1997 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to the elections held on 13 and 14 April 1997 in the region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium placed under the transitional administration of the United Nations and to bring to your attention the following information, which was forwarded to me by the Transitional Administrator.

Local elections for 25 municipal councils and three city councils within the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) region were conducted simultaneously with elections throughout Croatia on 13 April. In addition to these local elections, regional elections were held for two county assemblies, and national elections were held for the Upper House of the Croatian Parliament. Owing to technical difficulties, particularly the late delivery of electoral materials, voting inside the region was extended to 14 April, and to 15 April in one polling location. Nearly 500 international observers were deployed throughout Croatia to observe the elections. Within the UNTAES region, over 150 UNTAES observers were deployed to all polling stations as static monitors. In addition, 30 observer teams from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as observers from the Council of Europe and representatives of the diplomatic community visited numerous polling stations during the elections. The Transitional Administrator has informed me that no intimidation, violence or electoral improprieties were observed or reported before, during or after the elections.

The framework for the elections in the region was defined by the Joint Implementation Committee (JIC) on Elections, which met on a regular basis from early October 1996. In accordance with the Basic Agreement and under the agreed framework, voter eligibility was defined to include the following four categories of persons for whom separate lists were prepared:

(a) Residents of the region who were listed in the 1991 census and who stayed in the region and collected their pre-printed Croatian documents (domovnica and identity card). A total of 69,158 persons in the region were registered under this category;

(b) Former residents of the region, mainly Croats, who left after the 1991 census and registered as displaced persons with the Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees. A total of 61,326 persons outside the region were registered under this category;

(c) Residents of the region who entered the region after the 1991 census, who applied for documents, filled out registration forms and chose to vote for candidates to be elected to municipal or city councils within the region. A total of 10,086 persons in the region were registered under this category;

(d) Residents of the region who entered the region after the 1991 census, applied for documents, filled out registration forms, but chose to vote in absentia for candidates to be elected to national, regional and local bodies in other parts of Croatia. A total of 1,692 persons in the region were registered under this category.

Persons currently living in the region voted at 193 polling stations in the region, including 30 locations for absentee voting for authorities outside the region. The displaced persons elsewhere in Croatia cast absentee ballots at 645 polling stations in 75 polling locations.

The final number of voters inside the region was over 71,000, of whom fewer than 1,000 (out of the registered 1,692 persons) voted in absentia for the authorities to be elected in their former places of residence. This included a significant number of residents of the region whose names did not appear on the list of voters but who were able to cast their votes owing to the special measures adopted by the Transitional Administrator on election day. These special measures, which enabled all residents of the region with Croatian identity cards to cast a vote, were assessed positively by all international observers. UNTAES and the Croatian Government will identify the total number of voters who fall into this category by verifying the number of voters recorded on the supplementary list of voters constructed on the two election days. Over 56,000 persons cast their votes in absentia elsewhere in Croatia for the local authorities of the region.

The 28 Local Electoral Commissions (LECs), which were appointed by the JIC on Elections on a multi-ethnic basis, were the competent bodies that conducted the elections in the region. Their main functions included receiving candidate nominations, selecting polling sites, appointing polling station committees, amalgamating polling results and announcing final results for their respective municipalities or cities. The LECs were assisted in their work by UNTAES electoral officers who had been appointed as electoral advisers. As the formal and final appointment of the LEC members was considerably delayed, most of the preparatory work was carried out by the electoral officers.

An electoral code of conduct was developed by the JIC on Elections, which laid out fundamental principles and rules to be followed by all participants in the electoral process. On the recommendation of the JIC on Elections, the Transitional Administrator promulgated the code of conduct on the occasion of the formal announcement of the elections in the region on 11 March 1997. The JIC on Elections also appointed the Electoral Appeals Commission (EAC), composed of Serb and Croat jurists and chaired by an UNTAES-appointed international

judge. The Media Experts commission (MEC) was appointed with a similar composition to monitor, inter alia, equitable access for all registered political parties and candidates.

As required by the code of conduct, both Commissions have presented their final reports on the conduct of the elections. EAC reported that most complaints received were either corrected by the special measures adopted by the Transitional Administrator on election day or dismissed after due consideration. MEC reported that several infractions of the code of conduct were corrected by informal intervention. Both Commissions concluded that the free and fair character of the elections was not affected by these issues. Their final reports will be considered by the JIC on Elections on 30 April.

Preliminary results of the elections prepared by the LECs were announced by UNTAES on 19 April (see annex). The elections held in the region were subsequently certified by the Transitional Administrator on 22 April 1997. Official and final results will be formally reported by the LECs to the JIC on Elections on Wednesday, 30 April. A 48-hour period for political parties to appeal the results will come into effect immediately after the final announcement. Following these procedures, and provided that the results of the elections are finalized, the Transitional Administrator will be in a position to certify the final results, in accordance with the UNTAES mandate.

The Transitional Administrator has indicated to me that the successful holding of elections in the UNTAES-administered region has been an essential step for further progress in the peaceful reintegration of the region. It marks an important milestone for the legitimate representation of the local population in the Croatian constitutional and legal system. It also opens the way for the two-way return of all displaced persons in Croatia. In this regard, rapid progress has been made in this area with the adoption by the Croatian Government, on 24 April 1997, of the Agreed Procedures on Return.

I should be grateful if you would bring the above to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

Annex

Preliminary election results from the party list in the region administered by the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium[a]

1. House of Counties, Croatian Parliament[b]

HDZ	41
HSS	9
HSLS	7
SDP	4
IDS	2

2. Osijek-Baranja County

County Assembly		Beli Manistir City Council	
HDZ	25	SDSS	15
HSLS	9	HDZ	11
HSLS/SDP/HSP	3		
SDSS	6		
HSS	2		

3. Vukovar-Sirmium County

County Assembly		Vukovar City Council		Ilok City Council	
HDZ	24	HDZ	12	HDZ	20
SDSS	10	SDSS	12	SDSS	6
HSS/HSLS	4	IND	2		
IND	2				

4. Municipal councils

Osijek-Baranja County

Antunovac		Draz		Knezevi Vinogradi	
HDZ	12	HDZ	12	HDZ	7
HSP	2	SDSS	2	SDSS	4
IND	2	HSS	2	IND	5

/...

Bilje		Erdut		Petlovac	
HDZ	10	HDZ	5	HDZ	12
SDSS	3	SDSS	11	SDSS	3
IND	3			HSS	1
Ceminac		**Ernestinovo**		**Popovac**	
HDZ	11	HDZ	12	HDZ	9
SDSS	4	SDSS	2	SDSS	7
HSS	1	HSS/HSLS	2		
Darda		**Jagodnjak**		**Sodolovci**	
HDZ	5	HDZ	0	SDSS	16
SDSS	10	SDSS	16		
HSS	1				
Tenja					
HDZ	3				
SDSS	12				
HSS	1				

Vukovar-Sirmium County

Bogdanovci		Negoslavci		Tordinci	
HDZ	10	SDSS	16	HSZ	13
IND	6			HSS	3
				SDSS	2
				HSP	1
				IND	1
Borovo		**Nijemci**		**Tovarnik**	
SDSS	16	HDZ	12	HDZ	11
		SDSS	3	SDSS	5
		HNS/HSS/ HSLS	1		
Lovas		**Stari Jankovci**		**Trpinja**	
HDZ	11	HDZ	10	SDSS	16
SDSS	5	SDSS	6		

/...

Markusica		Mirkovci		Tompojevci	
SDSS	16	HDZ	2	HDZ	11
		SDSS	14	SDSS	5

Note: The following political party abbreviations are used in this table:

HDZ - Croatian Democratic Union
HNS - Croatian People's Party
HSLS - Croatian Social Liberal Party
HSP - Croatian Party of the Right
HSS - Croatian Peasants Party
IDS - Istrian Democratic Forum
IND - List of independent candidates
SDP - Social Democratic Party
SDSS - Independent Democratic Serb Party

[a] The figures above represent 75 per cent of the total seats which will be allocated according to party lists (seats allocated by proportional representation). The remaining 25 per cent of the seats will be allocated to elected candidates from individual constituencies (seats to be allocated by majority vote).

[b] Five seats to be named by the President of Croatia, of which two must be Serbs.